

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

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O P 031435Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 2973

INFO AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON UK PRIORITY

S E C K E T MANAMA 0492

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : ENRG, PFOR, PXOR, BA, QA

SUBJECT : QATARI REQUEST FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE IN
SETTLING TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH BAHRAIN

REFERENCE : DOHA 479

1. SHAIKH ABDUL AZIZ IS CORRECT THAT THERE IS A U.S. OIL INTEREST IN THE BAHRAINI/QATARI MEDIAN LINE/HAWAR ISLAND DISPUTE. ON THE "QATARI SIDE" IS KOCH AS MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM. ON THE "BAHRAINI SIDE" ARE CALTEX AND SUPERIOR. MOREOVER, SOME TIME AGO (MANAMA 151, FEBRUARY 1975) I CAUTIONED EXXON'S REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT LETTING BAHRAINIS LURE THEM INTO HAWAR DISPUTE WITH CONCESSION OFFER. IN SHORT, AS IN THE ABU MUSA DISPUTE IN EARLY 1970'S, FROM THE STANDPOINT OF U.S. OIL INTERESTS THE USG HAS COMPELLING REASONS OF NEUTRALITY TO STEER CLEAR OF THS TAR BABY.

2. I FULLY SUPPORT AMBASSADOR PAGANELLI'S ARGUMENT THAT ON
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POLICY GROUNDS USG SHOULD AVOID ANY DIRECT ROLE IN THIS

DISPUTE. HAVING SUCCESSFULLY DECLINED TO SHARE WITH THE BRITISH THE BURDENS OF THE BURAIMI, TUNBS AND ABU MUSA DISPUTES IT WOULD SEEM FOLLY TO GET SUCKERED INTO THIS LESSER ISSUE, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE SAUDIS ARE GROPING FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP ROLE ON THE ARAB SIDE OF THE GULF AND HAVE REPORTEDLY AGREED TO TAKE ON THE BAHRAIN/QATAR TERRITORIAL ISSUE AT THE REQUEST OF BOTH PARTIES.

3. IN THIS LIGHT I STRONGLY URGE WE NOT FAWL INTO THE TRAP OF APPEARING TO LEAN ON THE SAUDIS AT QATAR'S BEHEST TO URGE PROMPT SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE. I DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD BE RAISING THE QUESTION WITH ANY OF THE PARTIES, INCLUDING THE SAUDIS. WHEN THEY RAISE IT WITH US, AS AMIR OF BAHRAIN DID RECENTLY (MANAMA 326, BEING REPEATED TO LONDON) WE CAN TAKE THE GENERAL LINE THAT HAS SERVED US WELL IN OTHER TERRITORIAL DISPUTES IN THE REGION -- NO DIRECT U.S. INVOLVEMENT, NO U.S. VIEWS ON THE MERITS OF THE CONTENDING CASES BUT A STRONG U.S. BELIEF THAT PROMPT AND AMICABLE SETTLEMENT WOULD SERVE THE INTERESTS OF ALL.

TWINAM

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